Society, Herr House to Continue Lancaster Roots theme in 2011

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum will continue the 2010 “Lancaster Roots” theme for their programming in 2011, the two organizations announced in December.

In 2010, “Lancaster Roots 300” comprised two dozen events celebrating three centuries of Lancaster County history, beginning with the first permanent European settlers in 1710.

“Lancaster Roots 2011” will repeat some of those events—like the popular Heritage Trail Bike Ride & Walk in August—and will add several new happenings, including an annual storytelling night and “Music in the Orchard” at the 1719 Hans Herr House.

“The tri-centennial year is over, but the goals of that year need to continue,” said Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society director, Rolando Santiago.

In addition to celebrating the county’s first European settlers, Lancaster Roots aims to recognize “the contributions of the Native Peoples who lived in the county before and after the 1710 settlement, and the rich diversity of Lancaster County today,” Santiago said.

“These goals are a ongoing challenge for us, and an ongoing reason to celebrate,” said 1719 Hans Herr House director, Becky Gochnauer.

In an effort to honor Native People, the 1719 Herr House has committed to building a replica Native American longhouse on its grounds. The structure will recreate the look and feel of buildings once found throughout the northeastern United States.

Other 2011 programs will include a January 29 music night with soprano Sherrie Strange-Pratt, a May 16 lecture on “DNA: Opportunities and Dilemmas” with scientist Darvin Martin, and an October 29 harvest party and square dance at the 1719 Herr House.

Historical Society and 1719 Herr House classics, like the Lancaster Family History Conference in April, the Bookworm Frolic in August and the Snitz Fest in October, will also be included.

A brochure with the year’s complete offerings will be available in January. To receive your copy, contact Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society at (717) 393-9745 or lmhs@lmhs.org.

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New York soprano to inaugurate Annual Music Night

New York City soprano Sherrie Strange-Pratt and the far-flung Reunion Vocal Band will perform at the Society’s first annual Music Night, 7:00 p.m. Saturday, January 29, 2011 at Neffsville Mennonite Church.

Strange-Pratt grew up Mennonite in Cleveland, Pennsylvania, winning several vocal competitions as a high school student. In 1979, she was a featured soloist at Mennonite World Conference in Wichita, Kansas, and returned to the conference as a guest soloist in 1984 in Strasbourg, France.

From 1992-1997, she was administrator of the Boys Choir of Harlem Academy. Since 1999, she has been director of the children’s choir at Calvary Baptist Church, Manhattan.

She holds a Doctorate in Leadership and Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Reunion Vocal Band is a long-standing group of Mennonite musicians, singers and song writers from seven states and Canada. They emphasize vocal harmony through a variety of musical styles including folk, folk-rock, gospel, country, rock and jazz, and have recorded two albums, Hunger for Beauty (1991) and What We Have Tasted (1995).

The group first met together in 1989 at the suggestion of Mennonite Mission Network executive James R. Krabill. Although distance makes regular meetings difficult, the group tries to perform once a year.

Lititz member Dennis Maust expects that a Lancaster-area concert will include at least himself and Dean Clemmer of Lancaster, Don Kulp of Salunga, Jerry Lehman of Akron and Steve Walker of Ephrata.

The annual Music Night aims to capture some of the vocal diversity and spirited expression that drew an overflow crowd to the Festival of Roots and Music at Strasburg Mennonite Church in January 2010.

Tickets for the January 29 concert are $15, sold in advance. Proceeds will benefit the Historical Society. Call (717) 393-9745.
“Lancaster Roots”
A year wasn’t long enough to celebrate local Native American history, Mennonite settlement and the rich diversity of Lancaster County today. Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum will continue the Lancaster Roots theme in 2011. Here are a few of the events. Look for the complete brochure in January.

Pennsylvania German Folk Art Show and Sale
Tuesday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., through December 31, 2010
Show and sale of quality reproduction folk art at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. Admission is free; all art is for sale.

Annual Music Night
Saturday, January 29, 2011, 7:00 p.m.
An engaging mix of music including soprano Sherrie Strange-Pratt and the Reunion Vocal Band at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

The 1711 Mennonite Migration from Bern
Monday, February 7, 7:00 p.m.
A Quarterly Educational Meeting with historians James Lowry and John Ruth at Christian Aid Ministries, Ephrata.

Lancaster Family History Conference
Saturday, April 2, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Genealogist George G. Morgan and sociologist Dr. Donald B. Kraybill speak at this 32nd annual event at DoubleTree Resort Lancaster/Willow Valley.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Annual Banquet
Saturday, April 16, 6:15 p.m.
Former Goshen College president, Shirley Showalter, addresses “Why Memories Are Important” at Yoder’s Restaurant, New Holland.

DNA: Opportunities and Dilemmas
Monday, May 16, 7:00 p.m.
A Quarterly Educational Meeting with scientist Darvin Martin at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola.

Music in the Orchard
Saturday June 25 and July 23, 6:00 p.m.
Beautiful music meets a lovely setting at the 1719 Hans Herr House in Willow Street.

Bookworm Frolic
Wednesday-Saturday, August 17-20, 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
A four-day open-air sale of over 40,000 used books at Historical Society headquarters, Lancaster.

Heritage Trail Bike Ride & Walk
Saturday, August 27, 7:00 a.m.-noon
Enjoy the Lancaster countryside and raise funds for a replica Native American longhouse at the 1719 Hans Herr House in Willow Street.

Pequea Settlement Historic Driving Tour
Saturday, September 10, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Starting at the 1719 Hans Herr House in Willow Street, drive, ride or walk between historic sites in Lancaster’s County’s first settlement.

Annual Storytelling Night
Monday, September 19, 7:00 p.m.
Miriam Book and Lawrence Chiles weave a memorable evening at James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster. Part of the Quarterly Educational Series.

Snitz Fest
Saturday, October 1, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Lancaster County’s beloved festival of Pennsylvania German food and crafts at the 1719 Hans Herr House, Willow Street.

Harvest Party & Square Dance
Saturday, October 29, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
October entertainment at the 1719 Hans Herr House for youth and the young at heart.

Other Social Events
The Historical Society sponsors five auctions per year of consigned or donated rare, out-of-print and used books, usually from 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. on the second Friday evening of alternating months. Auction dates for 2011 are:
February 11, April 8, June 10, September 9, December 9
Books are displayed at the Society several weeks before each sale. Catalogs appear free on the Society’s Web site, www.lmhs.org, and are also available in hardcopy format for a small subscription fee. Online bids and credit cards are accepted. Phone: (717) 393-9745; e-mail: usedbooks@lmhs.org.

Lancaster Roots 300 DVD’s for sale
A limited number of DVD’s of Lancaster Roots 300 events are now available for sale at the Society bookstore:

• Public Acknowledgment and Commemoration of the Native American Legacy, a service of honoring and healing held at First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster on October 9, 2010. Historian Jack Brubaker mentions this significant event at the end of his recent book Massacre of the Conestogas. (Volume 1—$17)

• Site Dedication Ceremony for a replica Eastern Woodland Indian longhouse, also held October 9, on the grounds of the 1719 Hans Herr House (Volume 2—$17)

• Both October 9, 2010 Events Above (Volumes 1 and 2 together—$25)

• Native Americans of Lancaster County, Panel Discussion with Native Americans Mike Salamh Jr., and Rusty Sherrick, with researchers Brenda Green, Darvin Martin and Sharon Sauder Muhfeld at Lititz Moravian Church on November 1, 2010 ($17)

A portion of the proceeds benefit the construction of a Native American longhouse at the 1719 Hans Herr House. Contact Jonel Herr Ness at shop@lmhs.org or at 717-393-9745.

Support all the great programming you’ve enjoyed in 2010. Become a member of Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and receive discounts on books, classes and field trips; free library use and a free subscription to Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage magazine. Already a member? Make sure you renew your subscription for 2011.
Why we do what we do: Carolyn Wenger

Former LMHS director Carolyn Wenger, now in her 34th year at the Society, did not want to be a historian.

"I avoided all the history classes in college," Wenger said. "I felt so sorry for Irvin Horst," Eastern Mennonite University's former professor of church history, "because he had a hobby of collecting old books."

Wenger began volunteering at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society to spend time with friends.

"Suddenly, I realized that some of my history is here," she said.

Her interest intensified when she attended a publishing conference hosted by the American Association for State and Local History.

"I saw the grassroots side of history rather than the academic side," Wenger said. "Here was an organ of the church I could contribute to."

Years later, Wenger finds herself collecting old books. "God can make us want to do things we least want to do," she chuckled. "I’ve considered my career here, a calling."

Teaching history is a Biblical mandate, Wenger said. During one recent meeting, she led staff outside to read an engraved stone on the front of the Historical Society’s headquarters: "That future generations might know."

The inscription refers to Psalm 78, which also says:

[T]hings that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us:

We will not hide them from their children;
we will tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done.

- (Psalm 78:3-4)

"The Historical Society is an ongoing ministry that the church really needs," Wenger said.

"Suddenly, I realized that some of my history is here."

In the book of Joshua, when the Israelites crossed through the Jordan River, God instructed them to take twelve stones from the middle of the river and build a memorial.

"The stones were there to help tell the story. That’s the way it is with museum artifacts," Wenger said.

"The study of history provides perspective for one’s life. Maybe you don’t get as disturbed by the current situation because you see parallels to it in the past."

The past isn’t always pleasant, but if you face the failures and the fears of your past, you find tools to enter the future gracefully, Wenger said.

Library exhibits Groff photo collection

Twenty-nine photographs, part of the collection of LMHS charter board member and former 1719 Herr House curator Earl B. Groff, are on display in the Society library through spring, archivist Steve Ness announced in November.

The collection includes original and reproduced images of people and places in Lancaster County, including a 1920’s image of the first Mellinger Mennonite meetinghouse, and a picture of High Industries founders outside their headquarters on Lemon Street c. 1931.

An image date and photographer’s name are missing for most of the pictures, but Groff’s own descriptive labels are attached, often neatly matted together with the corresponding image. One photo, used in the Good Books publication Mennonite Women of Lancaster County, Groff entitled “Aunt Esther K. Groff digs for a ‘mess’ of potatoes for the next meal.”

A framed three-image spread describes the Brunk tent revival meetings in Lancaster from 1951-1982. Below an aerial view of tent and cars, Groff’s label reads, “Local newspaper estimated for this Sunday evening service approximately 2,000 cars and between 12,000 and 15,000 persons.”

The images of people include many Lancaster Mennonite Conference pastors and bishops.

Groff himself is pictured in a 1959 photograph of LMHS charter board members.

During his tenure as curator of the 1719 Herr House, Groff also accumulated a large collection of antique farm equipment which he later donated to the Herr House.

The Brunk Tent Revival at the former municipal airport on Manheim Pike, Lancaster, c. 1953.
DNA discussion board goes online

Librarian Steve Ness and volunteer researcher Darvin Martin launched a new online discussion forum for the Society in November. The forum, found at http://discuss.lmhs.org, functions like a college "opinion board" or other public bulletin board that contains clusters of questions and comments from multiple participants. It can be viewed by clicking the "online forum" link on the home page of the LMHS Web site, and then clicking on a discussion item in the menu. To respond to a discussion, viewers must register using the "Register" link directly below the list of discussions. In the future, categories may be added to address other historical or genealogical topics, Ness said, but the current page is devoted to comments and questions on using DNA for genealogical research.

Brown hired as development director

Lowell Brown, who began doing part-time marketing work for Lancaster Roots 300 events in March, has been hired as Director of Advancement for the Historical Society, director Rolando Santiago announced in November. In addition to his fundraising responsibilities, Brown will continue to edit the Mirror newsletter and coordinate publicity for the Society in 2011.

Florian Lawton watercolor donated to Society

The Florian K. Lawton Foundation donated an original Lawton watercolor valued at $6,000 to the Society in September, museum curator Carolyn Wenger said.

"Old Time Parking", undated, depicts Amish buggies and blanket-covered horses hitched to fence posts a rain-soaked field in early spring. Two children peak out of one of the buggies.

Lawton grew up in Cleveland in the 1920's and studied at the Cleveland School of Art under Jack Burton, Paul Travis and Frank Wilcox, accomplished painters who helped to shape a distinct Cleveland school of watercolor-based American realism in the 1940's.

Lawton discovered the beauty of the Amish countryside during trips around the Northeast in the 1960's, and Amish scenes became his principal subject matter.

In 2010, a published retrospective of his work included a quote by former Historical Society director Beth Graybill. "Florian Lawton's widely acclaimed watercolors of the Amish lifestyle, primarily in his native Ohio, reflect a realistic, respectful interpretation of his rural neighbors. His love for the simplicity of nature and rural life blends artfully and thoughtfully with local Amish mores. His depictions of Amish life evoke integrity, dignity and authenticity. We value his work."

Director's Reflections: Listening

By Rolando L. Santiago

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. -Luke 10:38-39 (New International Version)

"Listening" is one of the functions we perform at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS) and the 1719 Hans Herr House. We try to listen to the voices of the people who are part of our ongoing organizational activities. As a result of listening, we try to facilitate a dialogue with others to reflect on the past and discern how to live ethically today.

About 250 people gathered on a warm Saturday morning, October 9th, at the First Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, to listen to Native Americans tell heart-wrenching stories of genocide committed by white settlers against Native communities just two and three centuries ago. Another 225 people listened to panelists on a crisp Monday evening, November 1st, at Lititz Moravian Church, who elaborated on more recent Lancaster County and regional stories of injustice against Susquehannock and Lenape communities.

At LMHS and the 1719 Hans Herr House, we continue to seek ways to support a conversation in which white peoples today discover their place of privilege in society and then turn to support their Native neighbors as they seek redemption from a seemingly never-ending experience of injustice. This dialogue requires that we learn to listen with humility and to acknowledge the role that forebears of the Mennonite faith community contributed to remove Native peoples from their ancestral lands.

There are fine lines to negotiate in this dialogue. On the one hand, we can foster withdrawal, self-pity, and guilt, or on the other hand, engagement, restoration and reparation of relationships with our Native friends. I look forward to the latter in a spirit of courage, dedication and celebration.

We hope you also find many ways to listen. At LMHS and at the 1719 Hans Herr House we want to support you, your family, your congregation, and your community as you conduct your own listening activities. Please be in touch with us at www.lmhs.org or www.hansherr.org on how we can support you.
Society sells Pennsylvania German folk art

For the second year, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society is displaying—and selling—hundreds of pieces of quality reproduction folk art during the Pennsylvania German Folk Art Show and Sale, held Tuesday-Saturday, 8:30 AM–4:30 PM through December 31.

The exhibit opened Friday, November 19 in the Society’s museum and gift shop on Lincoln Highway East, beside Tanger Outlet Center.

Over 30 artists are selling pieces inspired by original Pennsylvania German designs and techniques, including blue stoneware, redware, painted toleware, saffron boxes, painted boxes, hooked rugs, scherenschnitte, woodworking, quilts, theorem, fraktur and fiber arts.

“Toleware” comes from the French words for sheet metal, and often refers to painted tin boxes and kitchen items. Saffron boxes were originally made to store saffron, a yellow seasoning popular in Pennsylvania German cooking. Scherenschnitte, or “scissor cuts” are patterns and scenes cut out of paper, sometimes hand-painted. Theorem paintings are produced by carefully layering stenciled shapes. Fraktur describes a kind of illuminated manuscript, including birth and marriage certificates, written in a “broken” lettering style.

Wood carving by Ben Hoover.

The art forms in the show flourished within communities of Swiss and German immigrants to Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries.

One participating artist, woodworker Jay Brubaker, traces his craft to the celebrated Lancaster craftsman Joseph Lehn, who produced brightly-painted wood turnings and miniature boxes until his death in 1892.

Brubaker’s great-great-grandfather, Jacob Nissley Brubacher, recorded visits to Lehn beginning in 1874. A Mennonite bishop, Brubacher later gave lathe-turned saffron boxes as gifts to couples he married, Brubaker said.

Jay Brubaker was about eight when he learned woodturning from his grandfather, Jacob Engle Brubaker, a former toy designer for Hubley Toy Company in Lancaster.

Another participant, fiber artist Janet Mast, said that she learned knitting, crocheting and quilting from Lancaster County Mennonite women. “Sitting at the feet of these women, I learned that the things we use on a daily basis could be both useful and beautiful,” Mast wrote in an artist statement.

Theorem painter Linda Brubaker agreed, “The handmade objects of the 19th century, whether practical or purely ornamental, reveal a reverence for quality and a love of decoration that has touched me deeply,” she said.

Dutch Wonderland displays edible longhouse

Until December 31, visitors to the Castle Gift Shop at Dutch Wonderland will be able to see, and vote on, a scale model of a Native American longhouse that is almost entirely edible. The model, designed and built by 1719 Hans Herr House director Becky Gochnauer and administrative assistant Donnalee Mylin, is part of this year’s Gingerbread House Competition at the amusement park. The longhouse is 20 inches high, framed with homemade pretzel sticks and covered with dried fruit leather and coconut-flake “snow.” One end of the building is open, revealing a spacious interior filled with candy fish, pumpkins and other treats representing winter preserves.

Actual longhouses, built with logs and bark and often over a hundred feet long, were common in this area until the 18th century. In collaboration with local Native Americans, the 1719 Herr House is making plans to construct a full-size longhouse replica on its property. The Castle Gift Shop is open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am–5:00 pm. Tickets are not required.
Recent Acquisitions

By Steven L. Ness

Philosophy/Psychology/Religion
Shank, David A. Mission from the margins: selected writings from the life and ministry of David A. Shank. Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2010 (BV2063 .S485 2010)

Biography/Genealogy
Shenk, John B. A genealogical record of the descendants of John R. Shenk (1827-1896) and Susan E. Buckwalter (1836-1909). [John and Myrtle Shenk], 2010 (CS71.S324 2010)

History/Social Sciences
Martin, Darvin L. An experiment in grace: the centennial history of Frazer Mennonite Church, 1910-2010. Frazer Mennonite Church, 2010 (BX8131.P4 F73 M37 2010)

Language/Literature/Other

Biography/Genealogy
Peter J. Dyck [videorecording]: memorial service. Mennonite Central Committee, 2010 (BX8143.D93 P48 2010 (DVD))

Language/Literature/Other